



precipitate

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pre·cip·i·tate  **Pronunciation Key** (prĭ-sĭp'ĭ-tāt  
)  
v. pre·cip·i·tat·ed, pre·cip·i·tat·ing, pre·cip·i·tates  
v. *tr.*

1. To throw from or as if from a great height; hurl downward: "The finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travelers into the gulf below" (Thornton Wilder).
2. To cause to happen, especially suddenly or prematurely. See Synonyms at [speed](#).
3. [Meteorology](#). To cause (water vapor) to condense and fall from the air as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.
4. [Chemistry](#). To cause (a solid substance) to be separated from a solution.

v. *intr.*

1. [Meteorology](#). To condense and fall from the air as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.
2. [Chemistry](#). To be separated from a solution as a solid.
3. To fall or be thrown headlong: *an ailing economy that precipitated into ruin despite foreign intervention.*

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*adj.* (-tīt)

1. Moving rapidly and heedlessly; speeding headlong.
2. Acting with or marked by excessive haste and lack of due deliberation. See Synonyms at impetuous. See Synonyms at reckless.
3. Occurring suddenly or unexpectedly.

*n.* (-tīt, -tīt)

1. Chemistry. A solid or solid phase separated from a solution.
2. A product resulting from a process, event, or course of action.

[Latin praecipitāre, praecipitāt-, to throw headlong, from praiceps, praecipit-, headlong : prae-, pre- + caput, capit-, head; see kaput- in Indo-European Roots.]

**pre·cip·i·tate·ly** (-tīt-lē) *adv.*

**pre·cip·i·tate·ness** *n.*

**pre·cip·i·ta·tive** *adj.*

**pre·cip·i·ta·tor** *n.*

**Usage Note:** The adjective *precipitate* and the adverb *precipitately* were once applied to physical steepness but are now used primarily of rash, headlong actions: *Their precipitate entry into the foreign markets led to disaster. He withdrew precipitately from the race. Precipitous* currently means “steep” in both literal and figurative senses: *the precipitous rapids of the upper river; a precipitous drop in commodity prices*. But *precipitous* and *precipitously* are also frequently used to mean “abrupt, hasty,” which takes them into territory that would ordinarily belong to *precipitate* and *precipitately*: *their precipitous decision to leave*. This usage is a natural extension of the use of *precipitous* to describe a rise or fall in a quantity over time: *a precipitous*

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*increase in reports of measles* is also an abrupt or sudden event. Though this extended use of *precipitous* is well attested in the work of reputable writers, it is still widely regarded as an error.

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## precipitate

\Pre\*cip"i\*tate\, n. [NL. praecipitatum: cf. F. pr[e]cipit [e].] 1. (Chem.) An insoluble substance separated from a solution in a concrete state by the action of some reagent added to the solution, or of some force, such as heat or cold. The precipitate may fall to the bottom (whence the name), may be diffused through the solution, or may float at or near the surface.

Red precipitate (Old. Chem), mercuric oxide (HgO) a heavy red crystalline powder obtained by heating mercuric nitrate, or by heating mercury in the air. Prepared in the latter manner, it was the precipitate per se of the alchemists.

White precipitate (Old Chem.) (a) A heavy white amorphous powder ( $\text{NH}_2\text{HgCl}$ ) obtained by adding ammonia to a solution of mercuric chloride or corrosive sublimate; -- formerly called also infusible white precipitate, and now amido-mercuric chloride. (b) A white crystalline substance obtained by adding a solution of corrosive sublimate to a solution of sal ammoniac (ammonium chloride); -- formerly called also fusible white precipitate.

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### **precipitate**

\Pre\*cip"i\*tate\, v. i. 1. To dash or fall headlong. [R.]

So many fathom down precipitating. --Shak.

2. To hasten without preparation. [R.]

3. (Chem.) To separate from a solution as a precipitate. See Precipitate, n.

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### **precipitate**

\Pre\*cip"i\*tate\, a. [L. praecipitatus, p. p. of praecipitare to precipitate, fr. praeceps headlong. See Precipice.] 1. Overhasty; rash; as, the king was too precipitate in declaring war. --Clarendon.

2. Lacking due deliberation or care; hurried; said or done before the time; as, a precipitate measure. ``The rapidity of our too precipitate course." --Landor.

3. Falling, flowing, or rushing, with steep descent; headlong.

Precipitate the furious torrent flows. --Prior.

4. Ending quickly in death; brief and fatal; as, a precipitate case of disease. [Obs.] --Arbuthnot.

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## precipitate

\Pre\*cip"i\*tate\, v. t. [imp. & p. p. Precipitated; p. pr. & vb. n. Precipitating.] 1. To throw headlong; to cast down from a precipice or height.

She and her horse had been precipitated to the pebbled region of the river. --W. Irving.

2. To urge or press on with eager haste or violence; to cause to happen, or come to a crisis, suddenly or too soon; as, precipitate a journey, or a conflict.

Back to his sight precipitates her steps. --Glover.

If they be daring, it may precipitate their designs, and prove dangerous. --Bacon.

3. (Chem.) To separate from a solution, or other medium, in the form of a precipitate; as, water precipitates camphor when in solution with alcohol.

The light vapor of the preceding evening had been precipitated by the cold. --W. Irving.

Source: *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, ©  
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## precipitate

adj : done with very great haste and without due deliberation; "hasty marriage seldom proveth well"- Shakespeare; "hasty makeshifts take the place of planning"- Arthur Geddes; "rejected what was regarded as an overhasty plan for reconversion"; "wondered whether they had been rather precipitate in deposing the king" [syn: hasty, overhasty, precipitant] n : a precipitated solid substance in suspension or after settling or filtering v 1: bring about abruptly: "The crisis precipitated by Russia's revolution" 2: separate from solution as a fine suspension of solid particles, in chemistry [syn: separate from solution] 3: cause to separate from solution or suspension 4: fall from clouds; "rain, snow and sleet were falling" [syn: come down, fall] 5: fall vertically and sharply 6: fall headlong 7: hurl or throw violently 8: fall abruptly into a different

condition

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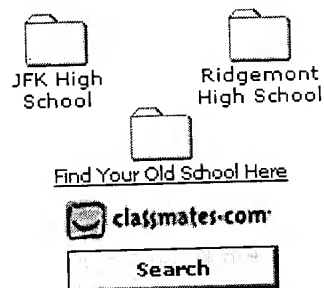
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